Life in the

Marineland of New Zealand

Introduction

The fact that you have gone to the trouble and expense of buying this little book is a clear indication that you both care for and have a live interest in the creatures of the sea and shore. We at Napier's MARINELAND OF NEW ZEALAND share your concern and interest and are very happy to make your acquaintance through the medium of these pages.

PLEASED TO MEET YOU!

In an endeavour to answer some of the questions which are more commonly asked by our many friendly visitors, we have gathered a few notes together on these pages. The pictures have been added in case you need a little assistance in recalling some of the sights you have seen during your visit.

Our Marineland first opened its doors to the public in 1965. Although it boasted only one small, solitary pool in those days, whose dolphin occupants were able to entertain in only a fairly rudimentary way (by today's standards), our initial visitors were very favourably impressed. As visitor's attendances have grown so have we and the fine Marineland complex in which we now work is a fitting reflection of the support which we have received from the public in general and from the people of Napier in particular.

In one specific way, the animals themselves have contributed to our growth — assisted, it must be said, by a liberal application of human love and care. We are referring, of course, to the many sick and injured wild creatures which have come to us as a result of individual members of the public's concern for their welfare. Very many species — from the rather unspectacular duck to the infinitely more glamorous pigmy whale — have been brought to us for shelter and, we hope, nursing back to health. Some have returned to the wild after their recovery; others have stayed with us and are now more or less permanent residents. It is this latter "pressure group" which has made necessary some of the extensions to our original accommodation.

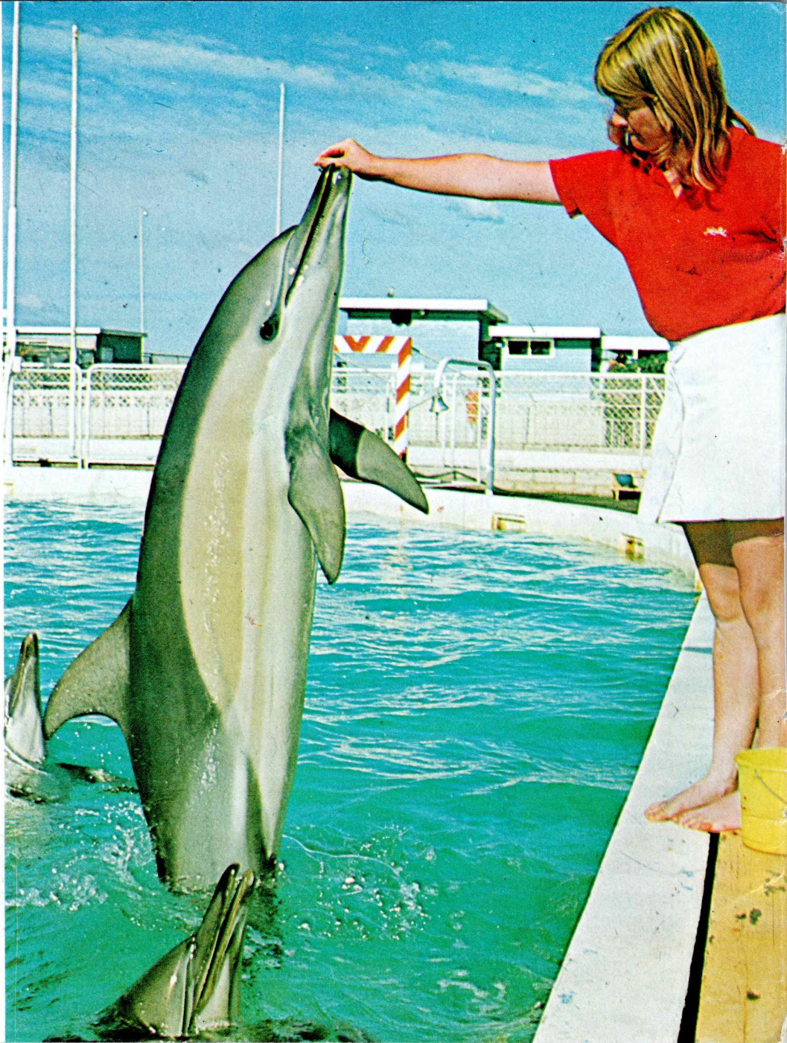
Other extensions were rendered necessary by decisions which led to the addition of creatures other than dolphins to the training programmes — first, those traditionally superb entertainers, the sea lions . . . then the unpredictable and very vicious leopard seals . . . then the fur seals . . . then . . . who *knows* what next? Perhaps our otters — although they are irresistible without need for training!

Irrespective, however, of the changes which have taken place since our beginning, and of those which will surely take place in the future, it will always be our aim to conduct Marineland in such a manner as will allow our visitors, the great majority of whom have no alternative means of becoming aquainted with our creatures and their characteristics, the opportunity of seeing for themselves the appearances and some of the capabilities of a selection of the wonderful animals which live in and on our seas and shores.

The Dolphins

To the extent that one can be sure of anything in this world, it is certain that the Marineland of New Zealand's emergence and rise to its present level of popularity was founded upon two species of animal. One of these was the dolphin — that air-breathing, warm-blooded, fun-loving creature which has adapted so successfully to a life in the sea. Known to look after its injured kindred by gently lifting them to the surface to breathe, and never known to have hurt Man — though well equipped to do so — the dolphin's human characteristics appear to be solely those of which Man would be justifiably proud.

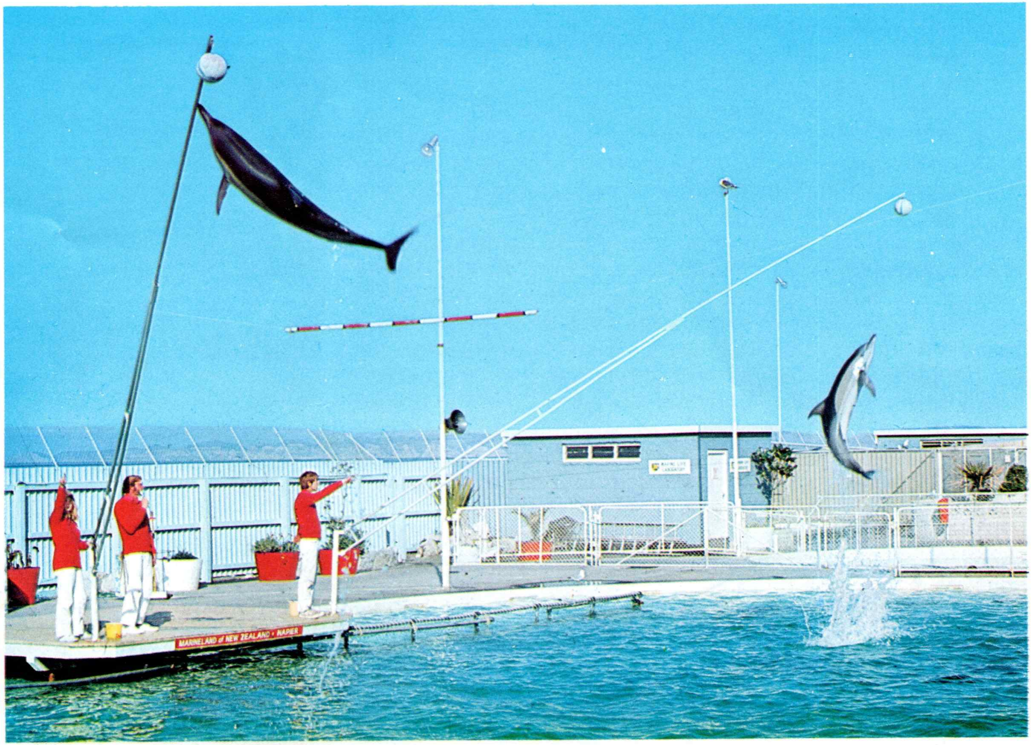
The Common Dolphin (delphinus delphis) is the species upon which our training programme concentrates. As its name suggests, it is readily found throughout the world and our specimens are normally captured in the waters of Hawke Bay — upon whose shores the Marineland of New Zealand is situated. Our dolphins are caught using a "tail-grab" device which grips and holds them by the tail until they can be gently lifted on board the capture vessel for a fast trip back to the quarantine pool at Marineland. Here the trainers concentrate upon coaxing the animals to eat dead fish — an act quite unnatural to them in their wild state but vital to their survival in captivity. Some four to six months later, the training programme begins and it may continue for over a year. The behaviours which the dolphins execute when trained are all extensions of the activities which they pursue in their natural state and the trainers use the natural playfulness of the dolphins to advantage in their training programmes. Dol-



phins swim by using powerful up and down movements of the tail and it is by similar means that they achieve their spectacular leaps.

The Common Dolphin grows up to two and a half metres in length and is thought to have a life span of between fifteen and seventeen years.

Artistotle, in his references to Dolphins, wrote "Incredible stories are told regarding the rapidity of this creature. It appears to be the fleetest of all animals marine and terrestrial, and it can leap over the masts of large vessels." Well . . . well! In fact, recent research indicates that the maximum speed attained by the fastest species is about 40 km.p.h. (25 m.p.h.). As for jumping, it is believed that 7.6m (25ft) is about their limit.



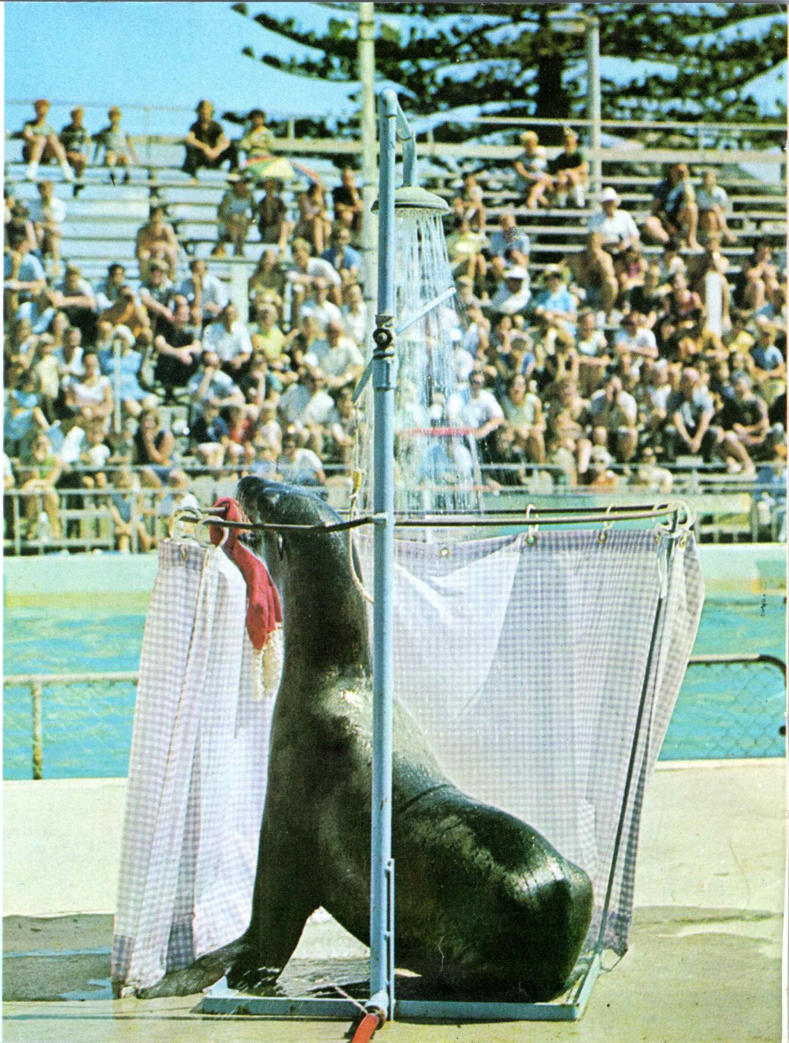
The Californian Sea Lions

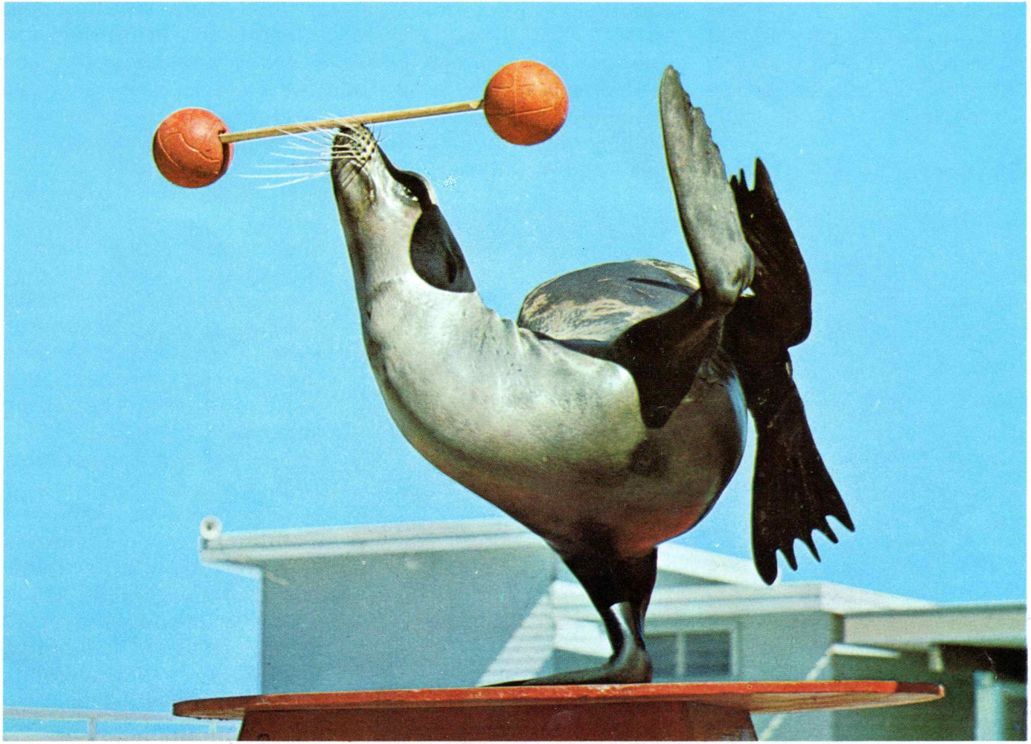
The second animal which has done so much to enhance the popularity of Marineland is, of course, the Californian Sea Lion. Our first sea lion was acquired in 1965 and very quickly became a firm favourite with all our visitors.

Circuses, zoos and marinelands throughout the world have featured Californian Sea Lions (zalophus californianus) for very many years but, having a permanent home and a pool to swim in at all times makes for a more tractable animal, and it is in the zoos and marinelands, rather than the circuses, that these animals give of their best. As its name indicates, this particular species of sea lion is found on the Pacific Coast of North America and the majority of those which find their way to marinelands and the like come from islands lying offshore from Los Angeles — such as San Miguel, Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara. To prevent exploitation, their acquisition is very carefully controlled by the Government of the United States of America. In the case of Marineland and similar institutions which have proved that they can successfully take care of these animals, permission for export is usually granted.

Their apparent flair for exhibitionism, together with their ability to assimilate training, usually make the Californian Sea Lions the stars of the show and their lengthy repertoire of behaviours is magnificent entertainment. Up to fifteen months can be spent on training to display standard.

Sea lions belong to the order Pinnipedia, meaning "fin-footed", and are believed to be descended from the same ancestor as the bears, whereas it is thought that the true seals





are most closely related to the otters. The Californian Sea Lion has the widest distribution of the five species of sea lion which exist. Males measure about 2.13m (7ft.) and females 1.83m (6ft.).

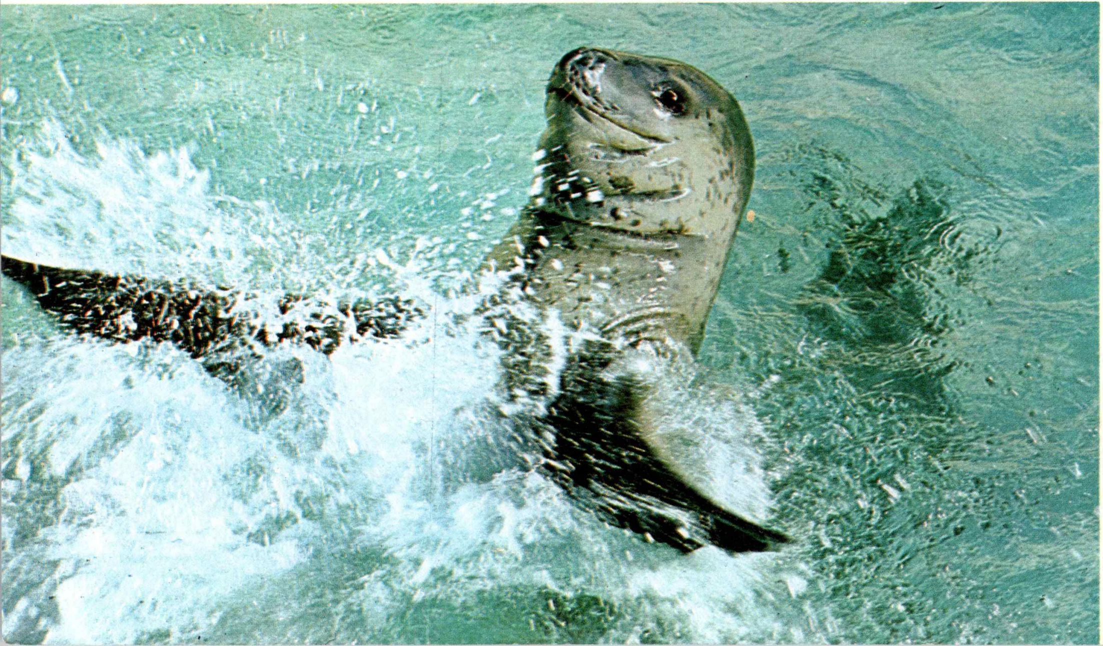
Because they have been hunted relentlessly for their oil and hides over the last two and a half centuries, the world population of sea lions has fallen from several millions to a few hundred thousand.

Each year, the animals travel immense distances across the ocean to return to their birthplaces to breed. Upon arrival, each mature bull endeavours to stake out a territory in which to keep his harem of 10 to 20 wives. The younger bulls are driven from the harem areas and spend their time just off shore or on neutral ground.

The Leopard Seals

Compared with the trim black figure of the Californian Sea Lion, the Leopard Seal (hydrunga leptonyx) appears a great blotchy-grey hulk of an animal. There is something wholly sinister about the shape and set of its head and a sight of its formidable teeth does nothing to inspire confidence in its peaceful intentions.

The Leopard Seal is normally a very solitary animal, coming together on subantarctic islands only in the breeding season. They grow up to 4m in length and up to 360kg in weight and an unusual feature of the species is that the female is normally larger than the male — by as much as 90cm in length and 100kg in weight. They are fast and capable swimmers. It is believed that the world population of these animals is only 250,000.



Outside the breeding period, the Leopard Seals spend most of their lives in the Antarctic where food in the shape of penguins, seals, sea lions and fish is plentiful. Here at Marineland we feed them on fish (no penguins, etc!) and they consume about 14kg per day.

Our Marineland of New Zealand claims the honour of having been the very first institution to train a Leopard Seal. As you can imagine, this is a very difficult task in which the trainer is exposed to real danger. Woe betide the trainer who shows fear in his dealings with this creature!

The New Zealand Fur Seals

The members of our rather large colony of New Zealand Fur Seals (Arctocephalus forsteri) all came to us initially as very young animals. Some were orphans, others were badly injured and nearly all were starving. However, where there is a caring public, willing to support a Marineland such as ours, a place exists in which such unfortunate little creatures can be helped. The first problem with which we are faced when we take in these animals (after administering first aid, if required) is getting them to feed. Young Fur Seals can be just as stubborn as human babies when feed times come around and, with their long, needle-sharp teeth, they can leave a lasting impression upon our staff.

A fully grown Fur Seal can be quite a sizeable animal, some 2m in length and 200kg in weight. When dry, the thick fur from which they derive their name, fluffs up and, besides making them look cuddly and soft, makes the animals appear larger than they really are. Of the seven species, six live in the southern hemisphere and only one in the northern. The latter is larger than its southern cousins.

Although they are often extremely energetic creatures, on a warm sunny day they are often to be seen sprawled in a complete state of relaxation from which it seems nothing will ever move them . . . dolce vita!

The Otters

If you promise not to tell the dolphins and the others, we'll let you into a little secret . . . our otters are not really marine creatures at all. In fact, they are Oriental Small-Clawed Otters (amblonyx cenerea) and their natural habitat is the rivers of the Orient. However, they have close associations with water (even though it is the fresh variety) and are cousins, in a manner of speaking, to the true sea otters found on North America's north-western coast — so they are not too out of place in a Marineland.

To see these fascinating little creatures using their paws to hold food, in much the same manner as a human being uses his hands, is very entertaining indeed. Their diet in captivity is mainly minced beef and fish.

Their coat of sleek dark brown is made up of a snug fawn underfur which is waterproof and an outer covering of long stiff hairs which are grey at the base and brown at the tip. The feet of most species are clawed, the forefeet being small in comparison to the hindfeet which are large and webbed.

Otters are elusive and solitary creatures except during the mating season. They are extremely agile swimmers and vanish quickly below the surface with minimal disturbance of the water if they feel their security is threatened. When disturbed on land, they have the ability to merge quickly into the background, aided by the apparently boneless contortions of their bodies and the changing shades of colour in their coats brought about by the movement of the outer covering of hairs.

The otter is an aquatic member of the weasel family adapted by its thick fur and webbed toes to a life in and around the water.

The Penguins

Although flightless, these birds are incredibly quick and agile swimmers. Indeed, they appear to be "flying" rather than swimming when one sees them darting to and fro underwater. Out of water, their upright stance and gait are particularly endearing characteristics.

The members of our thriving colony of Blue Penguins (eudyptula minor) have all been brought to us in either sick, injured or oil-polluted condition. Many such birds come to us and while, after treatment, the majority return to sea, a few are retained. The Blue Penguin is present in New Zealand in a number of distinct varieties. The Northern Blue Penguin, which closely resembles Australia's Fairy Penguin, is found in the North Island while, appropriately enough, the Southern Blue Penguin is found in the South Island. Another variety, the White Flippered Penguin (eudyptula albosignata), is mainly concentrated on Canterbury's Banks Penninsula. The Blue Penguin is the smallest of the seventeen different species of penguin. It weighs about 1kg and stands only 40cm high. It is plentiful around New Zealand's coasts and breeds from August to November when one to two white eggs are laid — incredibly large eggs, considering the size of the bird. The incubation period is about thirty-eight days and the chicks stay with their parents for about one month before being left to fend for themselves. Nests of grasses and sticks are usually well concealed in caves, crevices, under rocks,

Young Blue Penguins being fed.

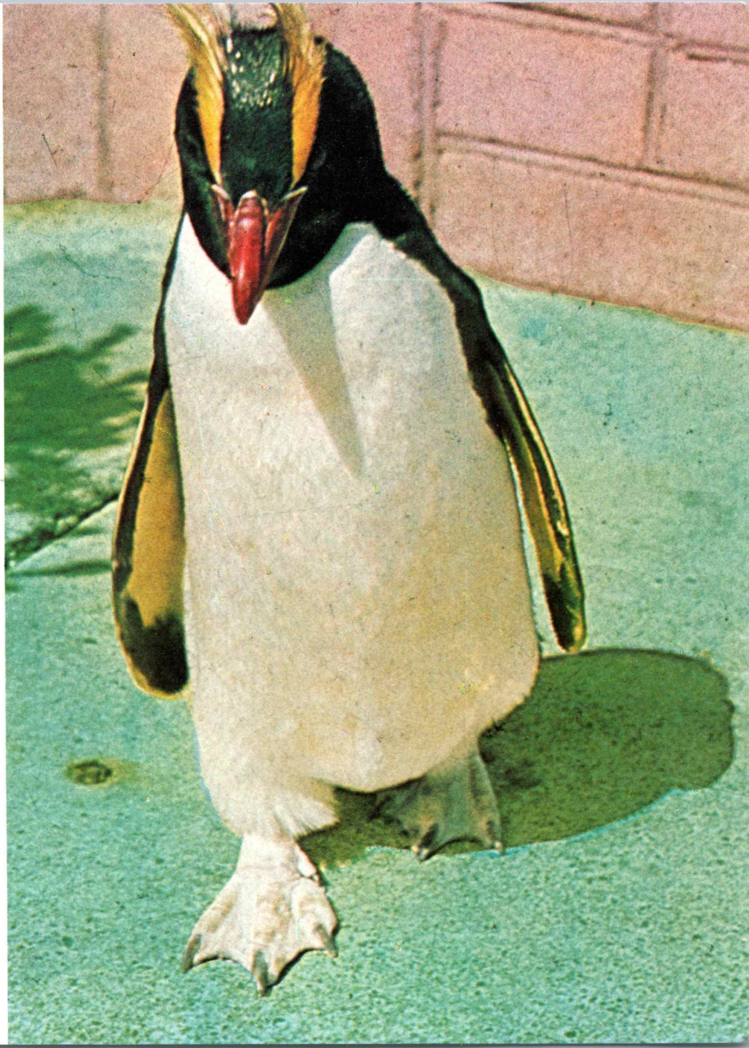
deep in vegetation, etc. These birds feed on small live fish and fish larvae in their natural state but, in Marineland, we accustom them to a diet of dead fish and their feeding time is a very popular event with both young and old.

From time to time, free board and lodging is given to other varieties of penguins which are brought to us for care and attention. In this category are the Fiordland Crested Penguin (eudyptes pachyrhynchus) and the Erect Crested Penguin (eudyptes sclateri) — both handsome birds with yellow crests.

Penguins swim at speeds ranging from about 8km.p.h. to 16km.p.h. (5 to 10m.p.h.). Naturally, they attain their maximum speeds when hunting fish or when seeking to escape the attentions of that most deadly enemy, the leopard seal. When endeavouring to evade pursuers, and also when at play, the birds often shoot clear of the water in curving leaps like so many projectiles.

The Emperor Penguin (Apenodytes forsteri) is the largest of all the penguins. It grows up to 1.2m (4ft.) in height and can weigh up to 45kg (about 99lbs). These birds are rather unusual in that they breed in the winter on ice along the Antarctican coast and, because no material is available for nest-building, the male Emperior Penguin, who incubates the single egg produced by the female, holds the egg on his feet and shelters it with a fold of abdominal skin.

Erect-Crested Penguin.



The Gannets

Seen close to, the Australian Gannet (sula bassana) is a remarkably handsome bird. Its magnificent golden head, whose colour is not obvious when the bird is at sea, hints at a victor's crown, to which its dazzling performance as a flier and fisher would seem to make it fully entitled. The gannet is a large bird about the size of a goose and it feeds upon small fish and squid.

All of the birds on display have been brought to us for care and attention in a greater or lesser degree. Many young birds have been retrieved from local beaches having been blown off their nesting sites at Cape Kidnappers (reputedly, the world's only mainland breeding colony) into the sea and having been unable to take off from its surface. We at Marineland take on the task

of getting them to eat and doing whatever else is necessary to promote their recovery.

The wings of the gannets, and also of the gulls, albatrosses, petrels, etc., are unclipped and they are absolutely free to fly off as soon as they feel inclined and able. From time to time a gannet will decide to opt out of our non-paying hotel but many stay to enjoy the free bed and board. One of our birds felt sufficiently at home to lay an egg during her stay.

The Gulls

The ubiquitous seagulls are not left out when it comes to free care and attention. Some come to us as the products of motor vehicle accidents but others just drop in and stay in the bird area because of the free food on offer. Talk about a "welfare State"!

Generally there are three types of gull to be seen at Marineland — the Southern Black-backed Gull (larcus dominicanus) and two smaller varieties, the Red-billed Gull (larus novaehollandiae) and the less common Black-billed Gull (larus bulleri).

All gulls have webbed feet and are fine swimmers. Although they will follow ships for limited distances from the coast, they are not generally far-ranging ocean wanderers like the albatrosses and the petrels.

Black-Backed Gull on nest.

The Other Creatures

From time to time, other varieties of sea birds are in residence, mainly recuperating after attention and prior to release. Among such may be seen various types of albatrosses and petrels.

Judging from the experience of the past, there seems little doubt that the tally will not end here and we look forward to representatives of other varieties of marine creatures becoming our guests (both invited and uninvited) in the course of time.

The albatrosses are among the largest flying birds. Of the thirteen species of albatross, four are found in the North Pacific while the remaining nine are confined to the southern hemisphere. They have no natural enemies and are very long-lived birds — perhaps living for thirty years or longer.

Royal Albatross.

NAPIER, New Zealand

Situated on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island, the city of Napier is the chief centre of Hawke's Bay province. It has a thriving and fast-expanding port which handles the province's exports of wool, meat, hides and skins, fruit and canned goods. The port also serves as the base for important commercial fishing enterprises. Major manufacturing industries have been established in and around the city. These include timber processing, fertiliser production, wool processing and wine-making.

In common with most of the Hawke's Bay province, Napier suffered a disastrous earthquake on February 3, 1931. Nearly every building was damaged or destroyed. One remarkable result was the raising of the harbour bed and the emergence of 7,500 acres of "new" land well-sited for the subsequent expansion of the city.

With its fine Mediterranean-type climate, Napier is a favoured holiday resort and it offers its many visitors a whole host of well-planned entertainments and attractions.

Acknowledgment
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